Leicester, Massachusetts, Feb. 26. 1846.

My dear Sir,

I am disappointed in finding time, as I had expected to do, to write you at much length, but cannot let the opportunity of sending by the 1st. March Ship go by, without at least acknowledging & thanking you for your kind and most welcome letter of Jan. 29. - to Feb. 1st, and also for the volumes of "Chambers's Miscellany" which came safely to hand by same Ship with your letter. Please give my best thanks - & poor return - to your daughter for this handsome gift & kind attention to my children. My little girl (the eldest, 9½ years) is delighted with the books, which she esteems a great treasure, and has had one or another of them in her hands almost constantly all this week. It so happens she has a ~~week's~~ vacation from school this week, & so more time than usual to give to reading, of which she is very fond - almost too fond. She will not omit herself to write a note to Miss Esther, for her brother as well as herself. I am much pleased with the volumes. They seem to afford a remarkably well-chosen miscellany, instructive and agreeable at once. Mrs. May also feels much obliged to your daughter for her kind attentions.

The two copies of your communication to "Bristol Mercury" (if I am right in the paper) which you enclosed to me, I have sent to the "Liberator" and "Nat. Antisl. Standard", which will doubtless publish it. — You will before this have seen in the Liberator the letter from W. Douglass of St. Kitts. I fear

that the names of ~~Boston~~ the merchants to whom the letter was addressed were made public; but as I have lent that paper, cannot now make sure of it. Of Mr. Ames I spoke as Mr. A—. I saw they did not print the letter verbatim, as I designed they should; for I sent Mr. Garrison the identical copy you sent to me.

You will have seen in the "Liberator" of Jan. 30., a long editorial on the Freedom of the Press, in which reference is made to some remarks of yours & to the Note of Mrs. Fry which you sent me (without giving any names however) As that note seemed to concern Mr. Garrison, I thought I would send it to him, yet with no idea that he would think it worth while to make it the subject of ~~special~~ public comment. Yet I hope you will not ~~think the notice~~ be displeased. I see, myself, nothing in his giving the note publicity which can be objected to by the lady who wrote it, though she may deem his criticism somewhat severe. I repeat I had not the most distant thought that he would publish the note when I sent it. I may sometimes go too far in this matter of publication. The fear of doing so has led me to refrain from sending extracts from many letters I have had from abroad (& especially from my Bristol friends) which I thought ~~would~~ were valuable. And here I must thank you & your daughter for the pains you took to make the extracts from my letter to Mr. Armstrong & send them to the "Inquirer". I am glad you thought it worth sending. I thank you, because I did greatly want to see the Tavistock letter noticed, and it seems no ~~other~~ one had noticed it. You say the gentleman (whom you have reason to believe wrote it) had resided

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some time in N. Orleans. You can hardly be aware how perfectly that explains to my mind his whole letter. Such cases are unfortunately not infrequent here — Northern men go South, and write home, or come home & tell, ~~how~~ what excellent & hospitable people Slaveholders generally are — how well off the "niggers" are — how much harm the Abolitionists are doing. Meanwhile these people are getting into Southern good graces, make money, buy slaves themselves, & prosper to think it all right enough.

I fear you will not be able to obtain a copy of "Stroud" on the Slave Laws. I know it is very ~~diffi~~ rarely to be met with.

I have ~~never~~ not yet seen A. C. Wright's pamphlet on the Union. He is a very uncompromising spirit. I feel a very great respect for him, and though he often startles me much, yet he much oftener commends himself to my mind as essentially right & truthful. With all his ultra-ism (so-called) he has I think a large fund of good, plain, common sense; and he has become a very shrewd observer of men & manners, stripping off the outside guises and seemings, & showing customs, institutions, &c. more nearly as they are, than we have been wont to see, and men as too often their victims. I hope you may see A. C. W. before he leaves Eng^d. I believe you have not seen him, but am not sure.

By this opportunity I send to yourself and Mr. Armstrong each a copy of the last Annual Report of the "Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society", the old "pioneer society", the Society which embraces such men as Garrison, Phillips, Quincy, F. & E. Jackson, Sprague, Remond, Philbrick, and such women as Mrs. Chapman, the Misses Weston, Mrs. Follen, Miss Cabot, and commands the sympathies of such persons (living in other states) as Burleigh, Pillsbury, Mc Kim, Abby Kelley, Lucretia Mott,

land (I may add, ~~in~~ not in vanity but in common justice to him) of Samuel J. May, now of Syracuse, New York. And while speaking of him, I will just stop to say I wish you knew him. He is now in the 49th year of his age, and is, and long has been, "every inch of him" a Christian minister — fearless, yet gentle of spirit to a degree unusual ~~with~~ in man or woman, full of kindness to every human being, ready to help all "without partiality, & without hypocrisy", and consecrating all his talents (not naturally brilliant, yet highly respectable, and faithfully cultivated in the school of practical religion) to the great cause of Christ & Humanity, in every aspect in which they present themselves to his mind. But this is a digression. If you should meet with H.C. Wright, pray ask him what kind of a man S. J. May is. I would all of his name did as much to make the name honorable. I hope at some day he may visit England. But I see little prospect of it. His property is small, and always will be. Were his income 10 times what it is, he could not keep it. Relatives in want, objects of charity of every kind, absorb all (and more) that he can spare from his own family. — But to go back to the "Report". I have not read it in the pamphlet (which I only received yesterday) but I heard the larger part of it read by Mr. Quincy (its author) at the Anti. Meeting. It contains a pretty full history of the Anti-Slavery Year 1845, — (better to call the year that brought in James K. Polk and annexed Texas a Pro-Slavery year, I think) — and as such, I think, will interest you. I also send you a copy of the "New York Weekly Tribune", simply as a specimen of that paper, which is one of the very best political newspapers of the land — in my judgment, taking all things into account, superior to any other; and that is the opinion of a very large number. You may also be pleased to see the Discourse on the Life, &c. of Henry Ware D.D (Senior) by Dr. Palfrey. I send too (happening to have a spare copy) the Eulogy which my Cousin above-named — S. J. M. — gave on Dr. Follen, before the "Massachusetts Anti-Slav-

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Society" (of which Dr. F. was a member) — the Discourse for the delivery of which the use of Dr. Channing's Meeting house and Pulpit was refused, notwithstanding the manifest propriety of ~~such~~ an Eulogy on Dr. F. being pronounced in that place, where he had so often preached, and in the pulpit ~~when~~ occupied by one — Dr. C. — who loved him as a brother, to whom he was peculiarly near in mind & spirit. And when, (last May) in the course of the discussion among the Unitarian Ministers about the projected "Protest" (since signed by the 173), I made mention of this slight to Dr. Follen & his Eulogist (because they were Anti-Slavery men) as evidence of a wholly wrong state of feeling in that Society as to Slavery, Mr. Gannett defended that refusal, and said he entirely approved of it at the time, and ~~&~~ continued to do so — he thought that house & pulpit no fit places for a "political disquisition". How they knew a "political disquisition" was to be given, in place of the intended Eulogy, Dr. Gannett did not explain. Whether it is a "political disquisition", you (if you have time to peruse it) will judge. Mr. May is, and for ten years (perhaps double that time) has been, a total abstinent from politics, viewed in a party light.

[Here I ought to explain, in reference to my remark at the commencement of this letter, that circumstances have proved more favorable to my writing at some length than I anticipated when, this a.m., I began the letter. I shall probably find time to say, after this disjointed fashion, what I have to say at this time.]

To go back to the subject of publishing private letters, — when I sent Mr. Garrison the N. Kittr letter, Mrs. Fry's note to you, &c., I also made a few extracts from your letter to me, and among them the account you gave me of your conversation with Messrs. Sturge and Scoble. My aim was only to let Mr. Garrison know (for the same reason you had informed me) what these gentlemen said of us (if I may say us);

I was surprised to see that he had published that. It ~~may~~ might involve you, ultimately, as publishing a private Conversation. I shall endeavour, in future, to lay my editorial friend under definite instructions as to what may, & what may not, be printed.

As to War, it is now universally (I believe) granted that it has all blown over. But the thing, as at present viewed, places our Government in a most scandalous and a most mean position. Mr. Polk & Cabinet have evidently tendered to the British Government the abolition of the Tariff of 1842 as an offset or equivalent for Oregon, or the principal part of it. In this ~~day~~ way the Slaveholding interest - our Masters - accomplish two objects of the very first importance to them, at one stroke; 1st. They avert a war, which would be destruction to Slavery. 2d. They gratify their jealousy & spite of the Free North, by striking (through the overthrow of the Tariff) a deadly blow at all those widely extended interests and that vast out-lay of Capital, in the North, which that Tariff has caused or created. They would think that the greatest day of Slavery's bold, bad Career, which should see her dangers all swept away, at the same time that her rival Freedom was crippled and thrown down. It appears, by Lord Aberdeen's acknowledgement in the House of Lords, that he & his associates of the government had received a certified copy of the new Tariff projected by Polk, and his right-hand man R.J. Walker of Mississippi, Secretary of the Treasury - and ~~that~~ this too, before the American people knew aught of it, and before their Representatives in Congress knew what that new Tariff was! And this is done by the leaders of a party, who have been

the loudest to revile the British government and people - to call our Whig party "British Whigs", to charge them with being bought by "British gold", etc. It strikes me, who am no statesman it is true, as being one of the most scandalous & despicable acts of which a government, in its intercourse with other governments, can be guilty. Wickeder acts it may do indeed, but this endeavour to curry favour with a foreign government, by a secret barter of the interests of a portion of its own people, is an act of self-humiliation quite too contemptible for men to do. The plan is a deep-laid one, and worthy the craft, the duplicity, and meanness of those who make merchandise of man - merchandise of God's image! - and who put little children of 10, 7, 5 years on the auction-block for sale to the highest bidder! By this scheme, the British Govt., with all its avowed enmity to Slavery & the Slave Trade, is to be made the instrument of strengthening and upholding both in America, by co-operating with all the Slaveholders' schemes. This is the ~~last~~ position of the War question now. Peace is an unspeakable Blessing, and perhaps can hardly be bought too dearly. But I do think that a price may be demanded which an honest man would blush to give - would rather die than give.

I should have before acknowledged the "Bristol Mercury" which you kindly sent me. I read nearly all of Sir R. Peel's long Statement of his proposed changes in the revenue & protection laws.

As to Mesmerism, & in which you suspect me to be a believer, I can only say that in Clair-voyance I have no belief whatever, though I cannot well account for some things I have seen & heard. I have been beyond measure disgusted at some pretended clair-voyant exhibitions in

this town. For the rest, I have thought that there might be existing between different persons an affinity - be it nervous, or something else termed magnetic, by means of which a kind of communication might could be kept up, unlike that which is the object of the senses. But all this, I doubt not, ~~this~~ is arrant nonsense to you; and I must confess that, having no very well-defined ideas about it, it is not easy to make a well-defined statement on paper. I never have felt any particular interest in the matter. I never have seen the account you speak of - of the case of M. Valdeman. The name of Edgar A. Poe ~~after~~ connected with it leads me to think it an unquestionable ~~the~~ hoax. He has, or thinks he has, a genius that way - is a very self-conceited personage, generally very flippant in his style of writing ~~production~~, though he has written some good things.

As to the Scotch Free Church, I think myself that their reception of Slaveholders' funds throws discredit on their whole movement - more, throws suspicion on their motives. It is only another instance of the old notion that the End sanctifies the Means. However others may feel, I cannot make it out how men can be Christian, i.e. Christ-like in motive & object, and yet make & justify a special appeal for help to a Church which defends & sustains ownership & traffic in "slaves and the souls of men" - yes, ownership & traffic in their own ~~fellow~~ fellow Church-members, whom they profess to believe are received and sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God, and members of the body of Christ; who even make this alleged fact of their slaves' being born of God an additional recommendation in their sale, a reason why ~~the~~ a larger price should be paid. How black, and damning, how defiant of God and a Saviour, is this accursed thing? And shall a Free Church, a Church of old Scotland, so stern, so strict, so steadfast as she at least claims to be, touch this accursed thing? and join with it in loving, Christian companionship? It is impossible, without sinking herself to the same level - down to the same abyss. It is inconceivable to me, how Dr. Chalmers can say and do as he has in this matter.

I rejoice to hear that you have given F. Douglass an invitation to your house. Such a fact is worth everything - it is a speaking fact -

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its influences, with those of every similar deed, tell powerfully in this country wherever known. I mentioned this fact at the close of an Antislavery address in this town a few evenings since, not mentioning your name of course, and shall do so at a County Meeting which we are to hold next week. I predict great results from Douglass's visits to Scotland. I am sure he will deal unsparingly with the Free Church for its grasp of the monies coined out of the sweat and blood of chattelized men and women. I fear he will exhaust himself before he enters England – I mean his physical strength & health.

[Instead of apologising for a short letter, – how are the tables turned on you! – I must now ask you to forgive my long one. The delay, which I have been able to make, in sending off this package, has given my little daughter an opportunity to pen a note to Miss Estlin, which I enclose.]

What blunders your papers sometimes make in giving American notices! The "Inquirer" for Jan. 24. (p. 61., 3d column) says that "Hon. Mr. Everett, &c. &c. &c. has agreed to accept the appointment of Professor of the Haward University, at Boston". I do think this unnecessarily bad. Three mistakes in less than a line! It should read "President of Harvard University in Cambridge" – near Boston, if you please. The "Bristol Mercury" has the same announcement, with all the mistakes – not so surprising perhaps there, but the "Inquirer" should do better.

My dear Sir, do not suffer yourself to doubt whether you are doing, or can do, anything effectual against so remote an evil as American Slavery. It is remote, only in its physical and sectional locality. Its evil genius demands tribute & homage from all lands & people. A true soul, wherever placed on God's earth, can give it mortal wounds. The high-toned, consistent, persevering rebuke of Europeans, and especially of England, Ireland, Scotland, is keenly felt here. The course of such ~~a man~~ men as Drs. Chalmers and Cunningham, ~~and~~ and of the Free Church, raise up a palpable

wall, difficulties that are seen and felt, in the path of those who would overthrow Slavery, and give liberty to the Slave. Therefore in some part we think & speak of the Free Church as we do - and as I will not do any more in this letter, though I do feel indignant, I confess. But, I pray you go on, ~~with~~ and encourage every true soul to act and speak out. Continue to express your sympathy, and to utter your convictions of ~~truth~~ - Spare not Slavery, find it where you may - expose it even at the table of the Lord Jesus, aye there first of all - drag it out of ~~X~~ God's temple, where it would fain find a sanctuary & refuge - make it feel that it is abhorred by you all, as it is by God; and be perfectly sure of this, that your labor shall not be in vain; and instead of lessening your interest in the demands of benevolence and justice all about you, it shall not fail to sustain that interest, and, where it is feeble, enlarge it. Is this not God's law, written on the heart? But I must not write a Sermon to my Bristol friends. I was led on by what you said of your occasional ~~fears~~ misgivings that you might be "more usefully employed in nearer objects." The Slaveholders and their underlings would tell you, you might be; they do tell you so, and are in hopes to make you believe it. Were your influence (British, Irish, European influence generally) so small and to such little purpose, why should the Slaveholder Presses be so anxious to divert that influence into other channels?

I have lately seen with great satisfaction a rich article by John Angell James of Birmingham, entitled the "Duties and Dereliction of the Church" - first published here in the "Advocate of Peace", but copied into a late "Liberator", where you will find it. Such a testimony, if our religious (!) papers will only publish it, will have a vast effect here. It is very searching.

J. A. James's ~~as~~ books have been very extensively re-printed in America, and his name is familiar in religious, especially orthodox communities, and it is with them that his present testimony is most needed, though needed ~~ed~~ every where; for the Unitarians, Universalists, Free will Baptists, 'Christians', like the publicans & sinners of old, seem to be going into the kingdom of God before the "peculiar people", the Scribes & Pharisees, the orthodox, the wise, the great.

A little paragraph, said to be taken from a recent discourse of William Jay of Bath, is of the kind that helps swell the tide against Slavery; - for Mr. Jay too has had a very great influence with the religious mind of this country. Henry Ware Jun. used to recommend his works to us, & speak of him with great respect; ~~to us~~ when he was Professor in the Divinity School at Cambridge. The paragraph says. "He stated a fact of Christian Slaves being sold by their professedly Christian Masters; and then looking down over the pulpit, with a grave and solemn voice said: 'Come up, old devil, and try if you can match that!'" I wish Mr. Jay would give us something more elaborate. Perhaps he has done so, but I do not recollect to have seen any such thing.

And now, my dear Sir, farewell. I wish it might be given me again to see your face, and those of all my Bristol friends, to whom I feel strongly & peculiarly attached. I hope this, in some way, may be. But, if not, I feel that we are united by spiritual ties, which bring us more nearly together than many are who dwell in close neighbourhood. I thank you for your letter, and every kindness to me, and I rejoice in your faithful allegiance to the Kingdom of Righteousness, Truth and Freedom. — Pray remember me cordially to your daughter - to Miss Carpenter - to Mr. & Mrs. Armstrong - and to Mr. James,

I would even write to one of them - long & prosy as this is - had I time; but I have not. Believe me,

Faithfully your friend, Samuel May

Date Feb'26 - received April 11 - 1846

To. J. B. Estlin Esq.

Bristol.

Eng.

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